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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

Letter dated 5 April 1999 from the Ambassador, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith,* a letter which His Excellency Zivadin Jovanovic, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has addressed to H.E. Mrs. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. I would like to ask you to have it circulated as an official document of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 9.

(Signed): Branko Brankovic

Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* The enclosure is reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

Belgrade, 3 April 1999

Madam High Commissioner,

I have carefully read your letter of 25 March 1999. Unfortunately, in its tone and approach it is no different from your previous views and those of other UNHCR officials, despite the fact that it was written at the height of brutal NATO aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Thousands of tons of NATO and US bombs and explosives have been thrown, since the beginning of the aggression, on 24 March, on towns, villages, refugee camps, cultural and historical monuments, religious shrines, schools, hospitals, bridges, factories and other civilian targets across Yugoslavia. All of this, in addition to extensive material destruction, caused many innocent civilian casualties. The aggression of NATO and USA has been coupled with fabrication of lies and unprecedented anti-Yugoslav campaign, particularly concerning the alleged "humanitarian catastrophe", with a view to misleading the international public and drawing the conclusions that correspond to the aggressor's goals.

NATO aggressor has projected a humanitarian catastrophe and managed with its bombs and missiles to produce one, in order to now take advantage of the columns of refugees from Kosovo and Metohija, a consequence of the aggression, in the international public as a justification for the crimes and further expansion of the aggression, threatening with new victims. NATO bombs are not selective - they equally tragically endangered and still endanger all citizens - Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians, Muslims, Romanies, Turks, Goranies, Egyptians.

I should like to inform you that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, on 31 March, called on all citizens of Kosovo and Metohija, especially Kosmet Albanians, not to leave their homes least of all their State, despite NATO air strikes against civilian targets and sympathize with other in need, to help each other and the country to defend itself against the NATO aggression. Those who have been displaced in the wake of the aggression receive Government humanitarian assistance. Inside the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia no one encourages displacement. People are seeking refuge for fear of an inevitable death facing them for the last nine days. The victims and plight of the population have dramatically increased with the daily escalation of bombing raids against towns and villages. Particularly devastating and tragic are the consequences of NATO missile attacks in downtown areas of large cities such as Belgrade, Pristina, Novi Sad, Cacak and many others.

Mrs. Sadako Ogata
UN High Commissioner for Refugees
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NATO attacks concentrate on provoking a humanitarian catastrophe and the largest human tragedy unprecedented in all of the FRY territory. Over the last few days, NATO forces have also bombed ethnically pure Albanian villages so as to provoke the stampede of refugees and aggravate the humanitarian catastrophe and thus win the support for the widening of the criminal aggression. In the city of Novi Sad, they destroyed a regional water system supplying 600.000 people with running water. NATO bombs have so far hit two shelters housing refugees from Bosnia and Croatia, several hospitals, over 100 schools, a great many cultural monuments and places of worship, telephone lines and other communications, private homes, farms, pharmaceutical plants, etc. In a refugee centre in Kursumlija alone, 11 refugees were killed. The destruction of chemical storages and other chemical industrial facilities in Pancevo, Belgrade, Pristina and other places has endangered the environment.

I therefore call on you and expect you, Madam Ogata, to condemn the aggression as a crime against peace and humanity. In these dramatic moments, it is necessary to join our efforts to provide all the assistance needed to all refugees and all those displaced by the senseless NATO aggression, in and outside the FR of Yugoslavia. This also stems from the noble objectives of the UNHCR as well as from the agreement between the Government of the FR of Yugoslavia and your organization that should be reaffirmed and lived up to precisely at this moment.

Please accept, Madam High Commissioner, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Zivadin Jovanovic
(signed)

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